

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
SANTA FE COUNTY
RESOLUTION NO. 2016 - 142**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING LEGISLATION IN THE 2017
LEGISLATIVE SESSION THAT IMPLEMENTS DENTAL
THERAPY, INCLUDING THE TRAINING AND LICENSURE OF
DENTAL THERAPISTS**

WHEREAS, a healthy community is a key goal for Santa Fe County ("County"); and

WHEREAS, the County has taken an active and strategic role in setting priorities for and funding health care assistance; and

WHEREAS, dental care is strongly linked to overall health, with research showing, according to the New Mexico Department of Health, "associations between chronic oral infections and heart and lung diseases, stroke, diabetes, and low-birth-weight, and premature births"; and

WHEREAS, as a practical matter, access to dental care is limited even for those who are insured, because of the lack of providers who accept Medicaid, the lack of full dental coverage for most people on Medicaid, the lack of dental coverage for people who have subsidized health plans through the Exchange, and the shortage of dentists in rural parts of Santa Fe County; and

WHEREAS, according to data from the Department of Health, over 50 percent of indigent Santa Fe County residents of all ages had no dental visit in the last year, and 16 percent of indigent Santa Fe County residents 65 or older had all of their natural teeth extracted; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe County Health Care Assistance Program is seeing a rise in claims for reimbursement of dental services, particularly for adults who earn too much to qualify for Centennial Care and immigrants who have no access to dental insurance; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Santa Fe County committed \$50,000 to support the provision of free dental care by "New Mexico Mission of Mercy," held at the Santa Fe Convention Center in April 2016, which provided over 1,000 County residents with free dental care, including dentures, root canals, and other procedures; and

WHEREAS, dental therapists are mid-level practitioners supervised by dentists and offering routine and preventive care, such as cleanings, fillings, and basic restorative care, and would provide care in more community settings across the County and the state; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Public Health Association has long supported legislation authorizing dental therapy, which has been in existence for over ten years in Alaska and over five years in Minnesota, as well as more recently in several other states; and

WHEREAS, for the first time the New Mexico Dental Association is supporting such legislation in the 2017 session; and

WHEREAS, a task force created in 2015 through Senate Memorial 136 has prepared proposed legislation that would amend the Dental Health Care Act to create the new category of dental practitioner, known as "dental therapist," who are trained and licensed in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, if enacted into law, the legislation would help address the significant shortage of dental practitioners and the lack of access to dental care for many County residents; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe County Health Policy and Planning Commission on December 2, 2016, voted to recommend to the BCC that the County support legislation in the 2017 legislative session that authorizes the practice of dental therapy in the New Mexico, including the training and licensure of dental therapists.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners supports legislation in the 2017 Legislative Session that authorizes the practice of dental therapy in New Mexico, including the training and licensure of dental therapists.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED THIS 13th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2016.
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By: Miguel M. Chavez
 Miguel M. Chavez, Chair

ATTEST:

Geraldine Salazar
 Geraldine Salazar, Santa Fe County Clerk

Date: 12-13-2016



APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Gregory S. Shaffer
 Gregory S. Shaffer, Santa Fe County Attorney

Date: 12/5/2016

COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
 STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

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I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
 Record On The 14TH Day Of December, 2016 at 01:21:28 PM
 and Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1812106
 of The Records Of Santa Fe County



Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
 Deputy Laura Minerva County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM
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